

Message Text

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42

ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-25 ADP-00 IO-12 T-03 OMB-01 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-09 H-02 INR-09 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03

RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-14 USIA-12 EB-11 RSR-01 AID-20 /160 W
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R 211155 Z MAR 73

FM USINT CAIRO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2767

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

USMISSION USUN

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

CONFIDENTIAL CAIRO 0840

DEPARTMENT PASS BAGHDAD AS APPROPRIATE

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR EG US IZ KU; PGOV

SUBJ: CAIRO PRESS NOTES

1. IRAQ/ KUWAIT BORDER CLASH DOMINATES HEADLINES AND MAIN ARTICLES IN MARCH 21 PRESS. MOST IMPORTANT REPORTED DEVELOPMENT IS OFFER OF MEDIATION BY SADAT, WHO HAS APPOINTED OFFICIAL TO FLY TO IRAQ AND KUWAIT " IF DEVELOPMENTS REQUIRE IT." SADAT HAS ALSO DECIDED TO SEND FONMIN ZAYYAT TO KUWAIT ON MARCH 30 AFTER HIS SCHEDULED VISIT TO BAGHDAD, AND GOE HAS ISSUED STATEMENT EXPRESSING " GRAVE CONCERN" OVER MATTER AND APPEALING TO TWO COUNTRIES TO SETTLE DIFFERENCES SO THAT ARAB NATION MIGHT NOT BE SPLIT. PRESS ALSO REPORTS THAT ARAB LEAGUE SECGEN

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RIAD WILL LEAVE MARCH 21 FOR KUWAIT AT INVITATION OF KUWAIT GOVERNMENT TO DISCUSS CRISIS. RIAD REPORTEDLY HAS CALLED ON IRAQI AND KUWAITI GOVERNMENTS TO RESTORE NORMAL RELATIONS, TO WITHDRAW FORCES WHICH MIGHT BE OCCUPYING TERRITORY OF THE OTHER SIDE, AND TO DISCUSS THE ISSUE. PRESS NOTES THAT SAUDI FONMIN SAQQAF IS EXPECTED IN CAIRO MARCH 21 FOR URGENT TALKS WITH EGYPTIAN OFFICIALS BEFORE PROCEEDING TO ISLAMIC FONMINS CONFERENCE IN BENGHAZI. (COMMENT: AS REFLECTED BY CAIRO PRESS, GOE POSITION ON ISSUE APPEARS TO BE ONE OF SLIGHT BIAS TOWARD KUWAIT, ALTHOUGH IRAQI CENSORSHIP HAS FORCED EGYPTIAN PAPERS TO DRAW PRIMARILY ON REPORTS FROM KUWAIT RATHER THAN BAGHDAD. EDITORIALS CALL ON BOTH SIDES TO STOP FIGHTING.)

2. ARREST OF SHARIF SIRHAN. ALL EGYPTIAN PAPERS CONTAIN MINOR ARTICLES ON PAGE ONE TO EFFECT THAT SHARIF SIRHAN HAS BEEN ARRESTED FOLLOWING HIS THREAT TO LIFE OF ISARELI PRIMIN MEIR. REPORTAGE IS STRAIGHT, AND IS OVERSHADOWED BY OTHER SUBJECTS IN PRESS.

3. MARCH 20 PRESS REPORTED THAT ARAB LEAGUE COUNCIL WILL DISCUSS US/ ISRAELI PHANTOM AIRCRAFT DEAL AT MARCH 31 SESSION. AHRAM NOTED THAT SECGEN RIAD WAS PREPARING REPORT ON SUBJECT OF BIG POWER STANCE TOWARD ME CRISIS; PHANTOM DEAL AND ITS EFFECT ON SITUATION; AND INTER- ARAB RELATIONS, INCLUDING RELATIONS OF ARAB STATES WITH PALESTINIAN RESISTANCE. RIAD'S REPORT WILL ALSO BE CONSIDERED AT ARAB CHIEFS OF STAFF MEETING ON APRIL 7. MARCH 21 PRESS REPORTED THAT ISMAIL FAHMY MET WITH ALL ARAB AMBASSADORS IN CAIRO MARCH 20, AND GAVE THEM NOTE FROM GOE REGARDING EGYPTIAN ATTITUDE TOWARD BOTH US STAND FOLLOWING PHANTOM DEAL, AND RED SEA ISLANDS QUESTION. NOTE REPORTEDLY SAID THAT US ATTITUDE WAS A " PROVOCATION," A CHALLENGE TO ARAB STATES ANDA TRUE REFLECTION OF US/ ISRAELI RELATIONSHIP.

4. PRESS REPORTS THAT SADAT' S MEETING WITH ASU CENTRAL COMMITTEE AND PEOPLE' S ASSEMBLY WILL BE HELD EARLY NEXT WEEK (I. E., AFTER FRIDAY. CAIRO SPECULATION IS THAT SADAT WILL ANNOUNCE MAJOR GOVERNMENT RESHUFFLE AT THIS TIME).

5. MARCH 20 PRESS REPORTED, WITH PHOTOGRAPHS, MEETING BETWEEN SADAT AND LIBYAN RCC MEMBER JALLUD WITHOUT COMMENT. MEETING CONFIDENTIAL

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WAS SECOND BETWEEN SADAT AND JALLUD IN THREE DAYS.

6. EGYPTAIR PROBLEMS. PRESS NOTES THAT ON MARCH 20, EGYPTAIR BOEING MADE EMERGENCY LANDING AT CAIRO AIRPORT FOLLOWING LANDING GEAR FAILURE. THIS IS SECOND SUCH INCIDENT THAT HAS HAPPENED IN FIVE DAYS. PRESS ALSO REPORTS THAT ASWAN/ CAIRO EGYPTAIR FLIGHT WAS CANCELLED MARCH 20 BECAUSE OF ENGINE FAILURE OF IL-18.

7. INVESTIGATION OF SMUGGLING RING CONTINUES TO DRAW MAJOR ATTENTION IN CAIRO PRESS; NEWSPAPERS REPORT THAT OTHER ARRESTS HAVE BEEN MADE IN PAST FEW DAYS, AND THAT INVESTIGATIONS WILL CONTINUE FOR ANOTHER WEEK. CONNECTION HAS BEEN MADE BETWEEN RING' S LEADER AND MEMBERS OF JEWISH COMMUNITY IN EGYPT, AS WELL AS HIS CONNECTIONS WITH A " JEWISH BANK IN SWITZERLAND."

8. MARCH 21 GUMHURIYYA REPORTS THAT " ISRAELI MILITARY SOURCES ANGRILY REACTED TO LAST SUNDAY AND MONDAY' S EGYPTIAN BROADCASTS BEAMED TO ISRAELI TROOPS ACROSS THE CANAL." GUMHURIYYA STATES THAT BROADCAST FOCUSED ON ISRAELI SOCIAL CONTRADICTIONS. (COMMENT: THIS IS FIRST INSTANCE OF REPORTAGE OF EGYPTIAN PROPAGANDA RADIO TRANSMISSIONS ACROSS CANAL.)
GREENE

NOTE BY OC/ T: NOT PASSED BAGHDAD.

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